



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

THE ROUND TABLE

TRAINING FOR RAPID READING

Why can some people read so much faster than others? Have they learned any special tricks? Are there any methods of helping students acquire the ability to read rapidly?

In a college Freshman English class it took one man three hours and a half to read an article that another man read in forty minutes. The first one did not seem to get more out of it than the second; in fact, evidences were that he got less. At any rate he did not get enough more to warrant that much more time. The ratio is about five to one. When the first man has worked eight hours, the second man has finished his work in an hour and a half and has had six hours and a half besides. That difference mounts up in a week or a month or a lifetime.

Is there anything English teachers can do about it? Are there any rules for rapid reading? My theory is that it is a matter of concentrating on paragraph topic sentences. A rapid reader applies the rules of unity, coherence, and emphasis to his reading; he keeps the main idea uppermost in his mind, he sees the relative importance of the separate ideas at a glance, and he gives most attention to the most important parts.

Rapid reading is not different in principle from careful reading; it is all a matter of concentration on the most important things and a matter of seeing the relative value of ideas. Rapid reading is not inaccurate reading. It is reading with a special emphasis and it requires concentration. Indeed, it ought to be a very means of training in concentration and for careful, accurate reading. It is not even very different in method from exact reading. Each should train for the other.

No matter whether the students are reading an article rapidly or carefully, I try to begin the discussion by asking what the most important idea is. Then I try to relate the other ideas to it. When I first taught, I used to begin at the beginning and plod straight through, and my recitations lacked coherence and emphasis. It is better to work down and around the big idea than up to it.

All reading is more or less a matter of emphasis and emphasis reduces itself to topic sentences. A study of them is a tangible method of getting the right ideas in their proper proportions. An accurate

reader is one who can pick out topic sentences; a rapid reader is one who can pick out topic sentences rapidly. The best ideas are probably more often than not in topic sentences, and so assignments in which students mark the best sentences are interesting ways of detecting this proper emphasis. Sometimes it is well to make assignments so that students will look consciously for topic sentences. Here is an outline for such an assignment:

- I. Write a subtitle for the article or sum up the main idea of the article in one sentence. (This is to keep the main idea uppermost.)
- II. Mark the topic sentence of each paragraph. Some paragraphs do not have topic sentences expressed. Where there is no topic sentence stated, write one.
- III. Fill in the following blanks:
 1. Number of paragraphs in which the topic sentence is the first one——
 2. Number of paragraphs in which the topic sentence is the last one——
 3. Number of paragraphs in which the topic sentence is in the middle——
 4. Number of paragraphs in which there is no topic sentence stated——Total number of paragraphs——
- IV. Total time spent on this assignment——

It is stimulating to compare the time it takes students to do the same thing. They do not like to be slow, poor workers even if they are often willing to do poor work. Sometimes it is worth while to ask them to read for an hour and to keep track of the number of pages they can do in that time. In an ordinary class I have found that some read eighty or ninety pages while others are reading fifteen or twenty pages. Comparing such figures ought to stir their competition blood a little. The best students as a rule read most rapidly, and it arouses interest to call attention to the fact.

HELEN RAND

MASSACHUSETTS AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE
AMHERST, MASS.

A CIVIC-ART PROJECT AS MOTIVATION IN COMPOSITION

The well-equipped, beautifully decorated building in which their school lives had been spent was a thing of the past; only upon memories' walls hung the pictures which the fire had destroyed. In sharp contrast, the unadorned spaces of the recently finished building brought dissatisfaction and the feeling of a pressing need. With eager faces and anxious voices the 8B English class surrounded their teacher, imploring suggestions for securing something to relieve this distressing bareness.